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### Citation for published version:

Cloke, P, Johnsen, S & May, J 2007, 'The periphery of care: emergency services for homeless people in rural areas', *Journal of Rural Studies*, vol. 23, no. 4, pp. 387-401.  
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2007.05.006>

### Digital Object Identifier (DOI):

[10.1016/j.jrurstud.2007.05.006](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2007.05.006)

### Link:

[Link to publication record in Heriot-Watt Research Portal](#)

### Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

### Published In:

Journal of Rural Studies

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# The periphery of care: Emergency services for homeless people in rural areas

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## Abstract

Until recently, homelessness in rural areas has received little recognition because of overwhelming assumptions about the urban-centredness of homeless people and their needs. This paper seeks to build on recent research that has begun to uncover some of the problems and characteristics of rural homelessness, by suggesting two significant dynamics which together can shape the experience of different groups of homeless people in rural environments. First, rural places reflect particular local qualities which contextualise both the circumstances of homelessness and the provision of services in response to those circumstances. Secondly, the contemporary governance of homelessness unfolds rather unevenly in different rural areas, producing distinct local service environments with varying degrees of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ status in relation to joined-up responses to the needs of homeless people. These dynamics are articulated through three case studies: a remote friary in a deep rural area of southern England; a small hostel run by a vibrant non-statutory organisation in a small town in the west of England, and two advice centres in a coastal resort in the north-east of England. Through these case studies we highlight the importance of both local reactions to the homeless other, and local relations between central government funding, local authority initiatives and charitable organisations, in the production and consumption of spaces of care in settings set in, or serving, rural environments.

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## 1. Introduction

Until recently, homelessness was popularly perceived to be an urban phenomenon of little relevance to the countryside or to rural communities. In rural areas, the issue of homelessness has been conflated with wider and more apparent questions of rural housing, and so the presence of, or need for services to meet the needs of homeless people in these areas has been deemed irrelevant in discussions of both rurality and homelessness. Over the last decade, however, research in England (Cloke et al., 2002) and internationally (Cloke and Milbourne, 2006) has begun to uncover some of the problems and dynamics of rural homelessness, focussing on the experiences and mobilities of individuals who connect with rural space and society in different ways. Homelessness in rural areas is

often set against a background of problematic local housing markets, with few local opportunities for social housing and with the rented sector often providing few year-round lets, due to pressures from second home ownership and holiday letting. Homelessness amongst local people will often be hidden and unregistered, partly because of the stigmatic nature of being known as homeless in small rural communities, and partly because the lack of local services for homeless people will usually require forced migration to a larger town or city where support services are located. Rural areas do, however, attract in-migrant homelessness especially in and around the summer months when long-term homeless people will travel into the countryside, and when the termination of short-term summer employment can cause in-migrant workers to become homeless in situ. In this paper, we explore some rather different articulations of the rural homelessness which is unfolding in Britain today, and in particular we emphasise two significant dynamics which together shape the experiences of homeless people in different rural

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environments. First, rural places are characterised by particular local qualities that affect both the circumstances of homelessness and the provision of services in response to these circumstances. Secondly, the contemporary governance of homelessness unfolds rather unevenly in different rural areas, producing distinct local service environments with varying degrees of ‘insider’ and ‘outsider’ status in relation to ‘joined-up’ responses to homelessness more generally.

We approach these issues through an analysis of three case studies of services for homeless people in different rural areas. In the first, a friary house in Dorset, we describe a small-scale service, hidden away in the depths of the countryside, meeting the needs of a rather forgotten and declining group of ‘wayfarers.’ Run by an ‘outsider’ agency that operates almost entirely beyond the influence of local district and county councils and without government funding, this service represents a seemingly anachronistic island of care in an otherwise purified sea of rurality. Formal homelessness services in the county are centralised in major urban centres, and the friary house also serves as a place of last resort for those homeless people who are excluded from that formal system. The second example is set in a Cornish town, regarded by homeless people as a ‘therapeutic place.’ The setting here is one where ‘outsiders,’ including small groups of homeless people, seem welcome (or at least familiar) and so an ‘insider’ organisation has been able to develop a particular ethos of care within systems of local authority co-ordination and central funding. By contrast, the third case study concerns what might be described as a post-industrial rural resort setting in Yorkshire, where the local council has been preoccupied with maintaining place-image in order to offer therapy for tourists, to the extent that problems of homelessness were denied for a long period and co-ordinated responses to homelessness have been slow getting off the ground. Local opinion seems strongly opposed to the presence of homeless people who are strongly policed as part of a local strategy to purify the space of the town. Services for homeless people have arisen through the efforts of the voluntary sector, and the result is some considerable unevenness in provision. Local ‘deserving’ needs can be met via a purpose-built foyer, but for others referral to a local bed and breakfast establishment is the best they can hope for. These three case studies offer considerable insight into the localised dynamics of place and service provision in different rural settings. Before delving into these localised examples, however, it is important to frame our analysis in terms of both the dynamics of rural homelessness, and the changing governance of homeless more generally.

## 2. Rural homelessness

It is now widely argued (see Cloke et al., 2000a) that homelessness and rurality have become discursively non-coupled such that homelessness in rural areas has been

rendered invisible, or at least significantly underemphasised, compared with the more obvious associations of homeless people and the city. The reasons behind this non-coupling are complex, but three broad explanations can be advanced. First, rural morphologies tend to hide homelessness; there are few obvious places of concentration and consequent visibility. Such morphologies tend to be reinforced by the tactics of homeless people themselves, and there is evidence that people experiencing the stigma of homelessness in a rural setting will either leave that place seeking housing or shelter elsewhere (Button, 1992; Wright and Vermond, 1990) or choose to make themselves ‘invisible’ by forms of mobility and rough sleeping in cognito which are aided by morphologies of rural landscapes and agricultural buildings. Although urban morphologies also provide opportunities for homeless people to make themselves ‘invisible’ (Ruddick, 2002) the visibility of on-street urban homelessness is not replicated in rural areas. Secondly, non-coupling occurs because of a series of socio-cultural barriers that exist within the practices, thoughts and discourses of rural dwellers themselves which lead them to deny that homelessness can exist in their idealised rural setting (Cloke et al., 2002). Thirdly, standard conceptualisations of rurality (as space) and homelessness (as social problem) have also served to drive these two constructs apart. Thus homelessness becomes ‘out of place’ (Cresswell, 1996) in rural settings, representing a transgression of socio-spatial expectations and resulting in a purification of rural space (Sibley, 1995) in which the rejection of difference is embedded in the social system. Again, homeless people may be forced to deploy tactics of invisibility in order not to challenge their excluded position from the purified social-spatial boundaries which currently place tight culturally constructed constraints on the in-placeness of homelessness in rural areas.

For these reasons rural homelessness has only been raised as a significant issue during the last 15 years, with all previous and much current emphasis being placed on problems of social housing in rural areas (Larkin, 1979; Milbourne, 1998, 2005; Rogers, 1976), and virtually no recognition that some of the people facing housing problems were in fact experiencing forms of homelessness (Milbourne and Cloke, 2006). Early explorations of rural homelessness (Newton, 1991; Lambert et al., 1992) used official homelessness statistics to suggest that, despite recognised undercounting in rural settings, significant evidence existed of homelessness in rural areas. Subsequent studies (Cloke et al., 2001a, b; Streich et al., 2004) confirmed that by the early 2000s rural homelessness comprised around 18% of total homelessness in England, a relatively high figure when compared with other international experience (Milbourne and Cloke, 2006).

Ethnographic research into peoples’ experiences of homelessness in rural areas (Cloke et al., 2000a, b, 2003; Robinson, 2003, 2006; Robinson and Reeve, 2002) has begun to provide detailed life histories of the complex

journeys and pauses which constitute rural homelessness. For example, Cloke et al. (2003) emphasise the different kinds of mobilities engaged in by homeless people in a rural context. The stereotypical expectation is that homeless people will move away from villages and small towns and migrate to larger urban settlements, which are recognised somehow as approved and appropriate spaces for meeting their needs. However, other mobilities were also encountered. Short-distance, short-stay moves within rural areas, ranging from sofa-surfing to a willingness to put up with what would normatively be regarded as ‘unfit’ housing, are a key component of rural homelessness and a key expression of the desire of some rural homeless people to ‘stay local’ (Cloke and Milbourne, 2006). Homeless people also move into rural areas, associating them variously as sites of leisure, work, escape or traveller ‘honeypots’ (see Halfacree, 1996; Hetherington, 2000; Lowe and Shaw, 1993). Equally, some homeless people move through rural areas, living out transient lifestyles of routes or circuits, which fold their existence in and out of rural settings, relying on rough sleeping and/or knowledge of the different forms of localised ‘shelter.’ It is further suggested that homeless people in rural areas are made ‘legible’ (Scott, 1998) via a series of moral codings which classify them as local/non-local, settled/ passing through and visible/ invisible. As Cloke and Milbourne (2006) suggest “The local/settled/invisible gains more acceptance, but rarely achieves the sort of contact with state bureaucracies that allows enumeration and therefore legibility. The non-local/passing through/visible is least likely to be accepted by these localised bureaucracies as having priority need, leading once again to a situation in which homeless people displaying these characteristics ‘don’t count’” (p. 26, see also Cloke et al., 2001c). As Law (2001) has demonstrated, the moral distinctions that are made around local/non-local, settled/mobile and visible/invisible homelessness are also germane in urban centres, forming part of generic anti-homeless rhetoric. Again, however, such rhetoric can play out differently in rural areas where discourses of denial can be prevalent because of the lack of ‘on-street’ evidence of homelessness.

Thus far, these accounts of rural homelessness have made little attempt to connect the experiences of homeless people with the emergency service infrastructure of the contemporary governance of homelessness. In part, the stereotypical assumption that homeless people have to move away from rural areas to gain access to services rules out any expectation that homeless services will exist in rural areas. In part, those services which are recognisable in smaller urban places—the hostels, shelters and drop-ins where congregational homelessness becomes visible—tend to be incorporated automatically in ‘urban’ discourse. Nevertheless two sources of research evidence suggest that emergency responses to homelessness do occur in rural settings. First, life history and autobiographical evidence indicates rural ‘stopping off points’ for homeless

people. For example, Donohue’s (1996) *In The Open: Diary Of A Homeless Alcoholic* describes sojourns in US rural towns such as Henderson where he received significant care and kindness. He evaluates Henderson as resource rich—a good place to be homeless in, at least for a while, where his unfamiliarity and out-of-placeness engenders generosity rather than marginalisation from residents. Secondly, there is evidence that emergency facilities for homeless people in provincial towns such as Taunton (Cloke et al., 2000c) can serve their surrounding hinterland, and might therefore be included in *rural* discourses in terms of a social spatialisation (Shields, 1991), by which rural practices give meaning to the seemingly urban spaces concerned.

Therefore, as part of a wider research programme investigating the uneven distribution of emergency service for homeless people in England,<sup>1</sup> we sought out and then carried out in-depth ethnographies in services located in, or serving, recognisably rural areas (see Cloke, 2006). Case study locations range from deep rural Dorset and small town Cornwall to the sizeable town of Scarborough, which was selected as a service centre with a substantial rural hinterland. In some ways the nature of homelessness and related service provision in Scarborough reflect recognisable urban characteristics rather than more rural conditions. Where this occurs it represents well the ways in which people from surrounding rural areas can become drawn into the more urbanised specificities of their nearest service centre. Through interviews with service providers and users, and participant observation conducted in the services themselves, we sought to understand how such services were interconnected with wider issues of governmentality—of insider/outsider status, production of spaces of care and geographical unevenness—and how the services were co-constituted by local context and particular groups of service users. Clearly these research activities raise methodological and ethical questions. In this case, participant observation has been used to contextualise each of the case study services and to suggest both questions to ask homeless service-users and means of interpreting their answers. Equally we only interviewed service-users who were present during the time of our research and we acknowledge that the information constructed from these interviews represents both partial and situated knowledge. Service-provider interviewees are described by their role, unless requested otherwise. Homeless interviewees are anonymised—all names are fictitious—although each gave their consent for published narratives containing interview quotations.

<sup>1</sup>The authors gratefully acknowledge the assistance of staff and clients interviewed in the services concerned. The research on which this paper is based was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (R000238996: Homeless places: the uneven geographies of emergency provision for single homeless people).

### 3. Governing homelessness

The problems of homelessness, and the development of appropriate responses to these problems, have been widely regarded as a powerful barometer through which to evaluate the dynamics of contemporary neoliberal society (De Verteuil, 2003, 2006). In Britain, the post-war years saw little direct intervention by statutory government agencies to deal with the needs of single homeless people (Pleace and Quilgars, 2003; May et al., 2006), and the 1960s and 1970s have been regarded as decades of ‘malign neglect’ (Wolch and Dear, 1993), as successive governments were content to allow a range of voluntary sector organisations to take responsibility for providing for the single homeless (Fitzpatrick et al., 2000; Foord et al., 1998; Hutson and Liddiard, 1994; Saunders, 1986). However, during the 1970s and 1980s new voluntary organisations emerged to help raise the standards of non-statutory provision (Foord et al., 1998; Harris et al., 2001) such that by the 1990s such provision was becoming unevenly professionalised (Harris et al., 2001).

The election of the New Labour government in 1997 ushered in a new form of ‘post welfare’ regime (Dean, 1999), with neo-liberal approaches being laced with increased public expenditure on health, education and other service provision, continuing concerns about the level of street homelessness and the ability of the emergency service network to cope with the demands placed upon it. This led to a series of new initiatives and an underlying shift in the form of governance (Brown et al., 1996; Ham and Carter, 1996). Weak regulatory structures and considerable granting of independence to non-statutory providers were transformed through the development of tighter regulatory controls designed to induce the self-regulation of non-statutory welfare services and service users alike. As a result, new and complex relations emerged between central and local government and different non-statutory ‘partners,’ prompting recognition both of the importance of governmentality at the ‘extremities’ as well as the core of such relations (Gilbert, 2003) and of the limits of governmentality where partial and fragmented penetration of social policy in different organisational and geographical spaces often creates an inability to reach the margins (Clarke and Newman, 1997; Larner, 2000).

For the purposes of this paper, we want to highlight three interconnecting aspects of the complex and fragmented relations associated with governmentality and homelessness. First, non-statutory service providers have tended to gravitate towards being either ‘insider’ or ‘outsider’ services. In a previous paper (May et al., 2005) we have shown how in the city of Bristol the involvement of both central government through Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) and Homelessness Action Programme (HAP) funding regimes (designed to reduce numbers of on-street homeless people, and to co-ordinate local responses to homelessness, respectively) and local government through taking the lead in developing local homelessness strategies,

meant that local non-statutory service providers came under considerable pressure to conform to statutory requirements so as to secure ongoing funding. Thus, local hostels became enmeshed in schemes which prioritised those homeless people with a ‘local connection’ and regarded as ‘entrenched and vulnerable’ by the local authority. Such ‘insider’ organisations contrasted with others working outside of such partnership—typically voluntary-run night shelters, drop-ins and soup runs (see Johnsen et al., 2005a, b) which bore the brunt of criticism regarding the quality of service and consequent encouragement by government to reorientate their efforts into more productive provision which did not support homelessness on the streets (Moore, 2002).

Secondly, the ‘revanchist’ (Smith, 1996) nature of social regulation, with its message of spaces defined by the vengefulness of middle classes against the poor such that homeless people became ‘walking exiles’ (Knowles, 2000), may be contrasted with evidence of the ‘spaces of care’ which emerge in the interstices of revanchist space to provide comfort and care to the excluded, including the homeless (Conradson, 1999, 2003; Cooper, 2001; Parr, 2000, 2003). Spaces of care represent complex spaces of inclusion and exclusion which not only facilitate the expression of care and the distribution of resources, but also make room for an articulation of difference which is less well expressed in spaces of tighter regulation (Johnsen et al., 2005a, b; Smith, 1998; Waters, 1992). Critically, the production of significant spaces of care does not map easily onto the insider/outsider status of organisations. Although the increasing professionalism of insider services can be viewed in terms of raising the quality of service, the charitable ethos of outsider services, which are least penetrated by the new governmentalities of social policy, may also performatively bring into being important spaces of care (Cloke et al., 2005).

Thirdly, the fragmented governmentality of homelessness has produced considerable geographical unevenness in the provision of services for homeless people. Although, for example, the 2002 Homeless Act requires all local authorities to formulate comprehensive multi-agency responses to homelessness within their jurisdiction, it is clear that the ‘home spaces’ (Peck and Tickell, 2002) of some large urban centres such as Bristol attract considerable funding through initiatives such as the Rough Sleepers Initiative and the Homelessness Action Programme), while other cities, and other types of geographical space “hardly seem to register in the minds of those allocating central government funds for the alleviation of street homelessness—despite compelling evidence of significant problems of street homelessness” (May et al., 2005, p. 705). In the remainder of this paper, we direct attention to homelessness in rural areas, questioning how these three aspects of the fragmented relations associated with governmentality and homelessness play out in what are often assumed to be geographical extremities of social policy in Britain.



#### 4. Dorchester: the friary and the wayfarers

The first case study involves a friary located in an isolated setting between the Dorset towns of Dorchester and Sherborne. The friary was established in 1921 by a Franciscan brother who became motivated to ‘rehabilitate’ the increasing numbers of unemployed men who were roaming the roads at the time. A separate house was used to give shelter and sustenance to ‘wayfarers’ at a time when workhouses (or ‘spikes’) were being closed down. This house continued to be used in this way until 2003, with a succession of ordained and lay Franciscans ministering to wandering homeless men for eight decades. At the time of our research (2003) the friary house had 10 beds, and was currently administered by a lay resident (‘Saul’) and overseen by one of the Brothers (‘Mervyn’). It was funded by charitable giving both from the wider Franciscan community and by donations from other guests at the friary. As such, this particular service had a complex multifaceted character. The Christian ethos of the friary house separated it from other more mainstream services. As Saul told us:

We are mainly a religious place; this is a spiritual place, a house of prayer. Our first way of looking at them [homeless people] is as people of God, not a number on the road. As they are coming into a place of prayer, we should expect to treat them a bit different from what a statutory body would. I believe there is really room for places like this.

The emphasis, then, was on meeting the material and spiritual needs of individuals, and although rules of the friary house restricted visitors to one weeknight or one weekend every 6 weeks (so as to provide for a range of different people and to discourage dependency on the service), these rules were implemented flexibly in response to particular circumstances.

In these terms, the friary house can be characterised as an ‘outsider’ organisation (see May et al., 2005), run on a shoestring and neither receiving government funding nor seeking formal co-ordination with joined-up local authority policies to keep people off the streets. In the wider area, services for homeless people are only provided in central places, and there is evidence of a number of agencies wishing to purify rural space both through formal policing and by more subtle cultural construction. In this context, the friary can be seen to have escaped significant formal involvement with the professionalism and governed regulation associated with multi-agency strategies, and in so doing the service was considered by other local service providers as ‘out of the loop’ and unprofessional. Indeed any such professionalism was clearly differentiated from the work of the house, as Brother Mervyn relates:

Every now and again the council organises something. I went to a day conference, with sort of PowerPoint talks; all about the many ways to get funding from the

Supporting People thing. It was all beyond me! It was all a bit back-slapping; a nice junket day-off. But ... it hasn’t made any difference to the way we work.

The ‘way we work’ remained geared to the traditional task of ministering to ‘wayfarers’ (see Bahr, 1973; Blau, 1992; Rossi, 1989), understood as old-fashioned gentlemen of the road and spiritually contextualised because ‘Christ himself was a person of the road, a wayfarer’ (Saul). The friary had over the years become interconnected with distinct forms of homeless mobilities through rural areas, in this case being part of a ‘south coast run’—a journey from Cornwall to London interspersed by convents, churches, shelters and other ‘outsider’ services for those older homeless people whose mobile lifestyle consists increasingly of ‘getting in’ somewhere for the winter, and travelling along the ‘run’ at other times of the year. Saul described to us how sleeping rough (under a hedge, in a bus shelter, in a shop doorway) was interspersed with more formal services offering beds for the night, and how walking, hitch-hiking and jumping trains without paying all formed part of the mobility of the ‘run.’ His account demonstrates that wayfarers are wily and skilful travellers, with detailed knowledge of facilities en route, hence the embedding of places such as the friary house into the run.

We interviewed several service users at the friary house, but in this context, one of the interviewees (‘Bill’) illuminates the character of the contemporary wayfarer. Bill differentiates wayfarers like himself from other homeless people of different generations on the grounds of cleanliness, work ethic and culpability (see Anderson, 1993; Cresswell, 2001). Whereas a tramp is viewed as ‘dirty and won’t clean himself,’ wayfarers according to Bill keep themselves clean, traditionally using public ablution facilities such as at railway stations, but as these have progressively been closed, less formal means are employed:

You can go in a stream and wash yourself. I’ve stripped off in broad daylight and just washed myself and got myself clean and got dressed and then walked, carried on.

Bill also defines his own wayfarer-type in terms of an insistence on working his way around the country:

We could go up to people, like the nuns, we could go up to the nunneries and knock on the door—‘Any work to be done today, madam?’—and she will say, ‘yes, go round the back, I’ll give you a sandwich and a flask of tea’. And you go round and you do chimney sweeping, brushing up leaves ... And she says ‘where are you moving on to?’ And you say ‘well we don’t know just yet’. And she says ‘well there’s a shed there if you wanna kip down’. And that’s how you did it.

Such principles are contrasted by Bill with what he sees as the something-for-nothing expectations of other, particularly younger and substance-dependent, homeless people

which he argues can be discerned by charitable people in the countryside:

if somebody else went up and knocked on the door and say, the person is on drugs or drink, they would know the difference, because you can tell it, you can read it.

Part of this tell-able, read-able differentiation is the belief that wayfarers have been made homeless whereas other groups have made themselves homeless. Speaking of younger homeless people, Bill argues:

They've made themselves homeless, but the wayfarers didn't make themselves homeless. We were made homeless by government schemes or whatever.

These differentiations are significant in the context of the Dorchester priory house. Bill and other wayfarers recognise the countryside as their territory. Although acknowledging that many homeless people are spreading out from the cities into smaller rural towns, perhaps to escape from the harsh, drugs-orientated urban scene (Bill calls them 'country louts'), he maintains that deeper rural areas, which require walking through, remain the *habitus* of more deserving wayfarers, and therefore that facilities such as the priory house which are located in the deep countryside (requiring an 11-mile walk from the nearest main public transport) suit wayfarers' needs. The deep countryside therefore remains relatively safe and therapeutic, in contrast to the towns which he sees as increasingly risky in terms of aggravation both from local youths and from other homeless people, and where services are less and less suited to his needs. It is important to emphasise here that walking in the deep countryside is not viewed in any way as romantic by wayfarers like Bill. He talks about walking through the country as a way of 'putting yourself at peace with the world' but rather than peace of mind in a comforting sense he talks also of 'learning to blank everything out' as you walk, indicating that walking serves as a response to his feeling of exclusion rather than as a celebration of nomadism (see May 2000). Bill's life is a story of going from being in care, to being in prison, to being homeless. He sees himself as doubly excluded—his homelessness is a result of social exclusion, and the contemporary governance of homelessness no longer caters for him. Conventional hostels and shelters are increasingly designed to meet the needs of other kinds of homeless people. The friary house and others like it, represented one of the few remaining *milieux-spaces* which are geared towards the needs of wayfarers.

However, both the shrinking numbers of wayfarers and the changing nature of homelessness more generally have meant that facilities like the friary house are subject to changing demands and circumstances. Even these avowedly 'outsider' services are becoming implicated in the mainstreaming of how homelessness is encountered in rural areas. Both the geographical spaces and the institutional spaces of rural care are being significantly infiltrated by 'urban-style' homelessness and different kinds of socially

excluded people. Brother Mervyn, for example, recognised a decrease in the flow of wayfarers at the friary house—"I certainly think that our numbers have dropped in comparison with the mid 80's. Less pass through here." As a result, serving the older generation of wayfarers who were often content to make their own way to the friary house had gradually been replaced with serving other groups of homeless people:

Mervyn: Two years ago I went with the names of 280 people who had been here the year before, and we found that the average age was in the 50's.

Saul: If you look at the average age now, though, look how young it is.

These shifting demographics reflect in part a shifting role for the friary house. Although not wishing to become more professionalised or wrapped up in the governance of service co-ordination, Mervyn and Saul recognised that their ministry was inevitably being impacted by changes to service provision elsewhere, and by the need to liaise with other service providers:

We liaise with all the housing agencies, with the council, with the hospital, with the mental health people, with all the people doing similar work to us, with privately-run and council-run hostels in Dorchester and Weymouth, with night shelters in Yeovil, Rough Sleepers Initiative in Southampton, Salvation Army hostels ...'(Saul).

With nomination rights to hostels increasingly being claimed by statutory agencies, there is a tendency for on-the-edge services such as the friary house to be used to 'dump' homeless people with nowhere else to go, especially those whose support needs or behaviours make them 'difficult to deal with.' As Saul suggested "we often get social services ringing us on a Friday saying 'I've got a person here I cannot get in anywhere.'" It is not incidental that such referrals are greatly more cost effective than finding bed and breakfast accommodation for the people concerned.

The friary house, therefore, became increasingly used to cater for younger homeless people, often suffering from addiction or psychiatric illness, who have nowhere else to go either because of the lack of other facilities, or because they have been banned from those facilities. This change led to friction between wayfarers and other homeless people, and between service users and the religious and 'dry' ethos of the friary house. Interviews with younger homeless users of the house reveal that the character of the service, and its ethos, are both well known and acceptable to potential clients, and indeed that the friary house forms part of the advice given to homeless people by other agencies:

Someone said, go to the friary, it's good, but don't take the piss or get pissed up there. If you take the piss in this kind of place, someone will go 'I love you, but fuck off'

and does it in a way which is proper. (Nick, a 38-year-old ex heroin addict and dealer)

They don't have to tell you the rules. There is an expectation obviously, because of the place it is ... you respect the fact that they have chosen this way of life. They do treat you like an equal, which you don't get very often do you? (Ray, a 24-year-old alcoholic)

Nevertheless very inebriated users were turned away; even an end-of-the-line service will have its patience exhausted in such circumstances, and to be turned away from the friary house would often necessitate a recognition that it was time to move on to a new area altogether. As Saul sometimes related to people leaving the house, 'you might have to face the fact that you have drained this place (meaning this rural area) and you're too well known, and you're not going to get back in the system here.' From being a stopping-off point for traditional wayfarers, then, the friary house began to become a stopping-off point for homeless people with nowhere else to go in an area whose statutory and charitable capacity exhausted. This in turn changed the nature of the service, and in December 2003, the friary house closed its facilities for homeless people, partly because of waning demand from wayfarers, and partly because it could not cope adequately with the support needs of its new clientele, many of whom had mental health problems requiring specialist service provision which is beyond the scope of the organisation.

### 5. Bodmin: the hostel and the transients

Our second example of a rural service for homeless people is a large but anonymous house in the Cornish market town of Bodmin (population 3500). Since the mid-1980s a local charitable organisation—St Petrocs Society—has been developing a response to homelessness in and around Truro. Beginning in the basement of a church, it has increased its scope through the purchase of additional properties for conversion to 5–6 bed hostels, each with a manager on site during working hours, and through the employment of outreach workers. Each project is supported by a local group of 'friends,' and in the case of Bodmin the recognition of a suitable hostel property, and much of the necessary funding came from locally galvanised support, reflecting a perception articulated by a St. Petrocs outreach worker that there are anything 'up to 20–30 people out there somewhere,' sleeping rough in the surrounding countryside. Although the ethos of the St Petrocs Society centres on principles of Christian acceptance, and the involvement of many of the friends is faith-motivated (Cloke et al., 2005, 2006), each of the hostels takes on a local character, in part associated with its location, and in part with the (often secular) approach of the manager concerned. Bodmin's history as a small rural centre was interrupted by expansion through London overspill in the 1980s, a change which extended the housing base but which increased pressure on local labour markets.

As important, Bodmin has a specific and enduring history of care, as a manager of the hostel ('Jim') told us:

Bodmin has had a psychiatric hospital for over 200 years, and there's been some form of hostel, from a leper colony upwards, for over a thousand years. So its got a historical culture of people with a lot of mental illness perhaps spending a long time in hospital, and then wanting to resettle in the town they've become used to.

This history demonstrates a place which has become used to the presence of needy others in its midst, and more concretely has meant that many 'local' users of the hostel have experienced mental illness and are going through a period of personal rehabilitation prior to living on their own (see Philo et al., 2003).

Although the criteria for release of funds under the Homeless Action Programme (HAP) are thought to work strongly against this kind of area, where the rough sleeper counts are necessarily low, the St Petrocs organisation has over the years become increasingly professionalized. Jim explains:

Over the years, the needs of people who are homeless, and the numbers of them, and the way that you would define homelessness in a more professional way, has meant that we've had to formalise the work we're doing.

The new governance of homeless services impacts on the work of St. Petrocs in two ways. First, and ironically, the HAP has added to the workload of hostel staff and associated outreach workers because the assertive approach taken by HAP-funded contact and assessment teams in nearby urban areas has served to displace some people to sleep rough in the surrounding small towns and villages. Secondly, the old 'open access' style has been replaced by strong co-ordination with local authorities for whom St Petrocs is the only provider in the area. Although core funding remains reliant on charitable giving, the general manager ('Simon') indicated that not only has RSU and local authority funding been acquired for new outreach projects, but that the organisational structure has been 'radically overhauled' with the management committee now consisting of a wide range of multi-skill professionals. With the onset of 'Supporting People' legislation (see May et al., 2005) the organisation is again having to react to changing circumstances—as Jim concedes:

Not necessarily that we have to change very much at all, but the way we seem to be thinking about it has got to change.

The wider area served by St Petrocs consists of 80,000 people scattered over 400 mile<sup>2</sup>, with the largest town having only 12,000 population. Such rural localities are ill-served by headcounts of homelessness—much homelessness is sufficiently hidden to resist such counts—and present considerable difficulties for service providers, not least in terms of actual costs incurred by mobile outreach



services which far exceed the standardised cost assumptions inherent in RSU funding. Jim admits:

It's almost impossible to say how many there are at any one time. What we can say is that on any given day we're probably working with 120 different people.

Managers do, however, recognise a distinction between largely hidden forms of local homelessness, and more transient homeless people whose problems come to light at times of crisis. Another manager, 'Jed' suggests

There's a lot of what they call "homeless at home" ... people who are in a crisis are often supported by people in their own families. There's an awful culture of 'sofa surfing' amongst friends ... month-in, month-out [that] never really gets flagged up with social services or wealth of job centres ... There is also a large number of people who ... like the transient lifestyle, but do get into crisis every now and again through substance misuse or mental health or just a physical problem. Then they ... start getting flagged up.

Interestingly there is little evidence of prejudice against non-local homeless people here in terms of who is granted access to the hostels. Indeed there is a recognisably seasonal division between service users:

Over the Christmas period up to spring, the vast majority of people who come to us have a local connection. They've either lived here a while, used to live here, were from here, have family here. In the summer there's a huge transient influence. (Jim)

Our interviews, undertaken in the summer months reveal that the Bodmin hostel was serving a range of transient men who had endured some particular crisis of homelessness. 'Harry' was 45 years old originally from Manchester and had been living in the hostel for four and a half months. A drug addiction led him into homelessness and he then found his way through a range of different urban hostels:

when I left Manchester, I went down to Plymouth, Plymouth to Bristol, Bristol to Weston Super Mare, to Taunton, back to Knutsford in Cheshire—things didn't work out there, smack city—back from there to Taunton, and then here. Well I went to the office in Truro and I was in a night shelter (in Cambourne) for twelve nights.

Harry's transience was mobilised by hitchhiking up and down motorways and seeing where he finished up. Eventually he decided that a move to rural Cornwall would get him out of the heroin scene.

So the only way to try to sort it out was to get out of it, and that's what I did. But I went to Newlyn, which was a big mistake—there's more drugs in Newlyn than....

So he ended up in Bodmin, in a space of care sufficiently intimate yet visible that he had maintained a regime of self-detox for at least 2 months.

Des' journey to Bodmin was less complex. A 49-year-old homeless man with a self-confessed 'severe drinking habit' he had lost his job in Oldham some 8 weeks previously, and with no local family connections to rely on he decided to head towards Cornwall:

I'd always heard about the surfing and all, and I've always fancied doing it, so I thought I'd give it a go, so I was in Newquay for about two weeks.

Des' search for accommodation led him to a referral process which resulted in access to the Bodmin hostel which he regarded as "like a stepping-stone from, I suppose you could call it, off the street, to here, to finding your own place." The hostel prohibits the drinking of alcohol, and Des has acceded to this rule, reporting that "I've not had a drink since I've come here." Although it would be unwise to suggest overly romanticised connections between rurality and addiction therapy, living in 'quiet' Bodmin seems to have contributed to decisions made by both Harry and Des to address their respective addictions, and points to a therapeutic role for rural-based facilities of care (Gesler, 1992).

Another user of the Bodmin hostel service was 'Keith' a 32-year-old born in London, with a history of living on the streets and in squats, and latterly of journeying around as a 'traveller' (see Halfacree, 1996; Hetherington, 2000; Lowe and Shaw, 1993). Although 'traveller' can represent heterogeneous attitudes, practices and lifestyles, Keith regards the core of travelling to be a journey of transience towards the new:

I suppose a traveller is someone that wakes up in the morning and thinks, right, what new place am I going to today? And that is my attitude every morning.

Keith describes his history as one in which "I've never been homeless, but I've always been homeless." For several years he followed well-worn routes of mobility around Kent, Worcestershire and Wales working in agriculture settings associated with hops, apples, daffodils and Christmas trees, and living in the back of cars, caravans, vans and at one stage owning his own coach. Reflecting on this experience, he differentiates strongly between 'the real traveller people' who 'keep the cogs of society greased' because of their willingness to work, and 'parasitic' 'homeless' 'families' who appear to adopt the traveller lifestyle but are regarded by Keith as 'spoiling what we have.' As with the wayfarers of Dorchester, then, there is a claim to authenticity here, in contrast with the perceived culpabilities of other homeless people. Keith's sojourn in Bodmin (he had only been there for 6 days) came as a result of decision to try a different form of lifestyle:

I've seen a lot in my life, and I've just had enough. It's time to ... take a back seat, slow down, do something I

haven't done before, and see what being straight does, and live in a house, live in ... the concrete jungle.

Such decisions are rarely straightforward, and Keith's transition to a 'straight' life living 'in the concrete jungle' is taking place over a number of years and still involves dreams of buying a coach and travelling around Europe. However, he told us of a number of factors in his current situation, which he found helpful to the process. For example, he enjoys the 'Cornish attitude' which he finds suitably laid back—'they let you do what you want, they let you be you.' He values the 'solitude' of a rural area, which is recuperative from the negative attributes of cities which he has experienced but wants to move away from. And he appreciates the values expressed through the hostel, its management and its organisation. This seems partly to be a response to the local management style—the manager has lived a traveller lifestyle in the past and Keith responds well to the resultant environment:

This is definitely one of the better organisations ... it is run road rules, traveller style. It's run by an ex-traveller, it's not textbook.

There is a strong sense here that Keith feels understood and accepted in a way which he finds untypical of some other service settings he has experienced. Part of this acceptance reflects how the ethical positionings of the organisation are performatively brought into being (see Conradson, 2003) in the everyday life of the hostel through the style and experience of its manager, who is an ex-traveller.

I like this, because there's a lot of love here ... it's not done for the wrong reasons, it comes from the heart here, you know, it's not done from the pocket, or for the pocket ... as other places are. This is done from the heart ... it's just done because it can be done.

Keith's experience suggests that the Bodmin hostel has been able to maintain some form of independent charitable ethos despite pressures to professionalise, and that the capability for a small intimate facility in a 'quiet' place to be run with rules, and heart, but without the pressures of Christian or secular proselytising, represents good practise of post-secular care (see Cloke et al., 2005) in a rural location. St Petrocs represents an insider organisation, which has nevertheless been able to maintain its own ethos and management style, which has proved particularly effective for these kinds of residents, especially given a setting which is perceived as therapeutic by those residents.

## 6. Scarborough: the advice centres and young homeless people

Our third illustration involves Scarborough, a sizeable town (population 106,000) serving an extensive rural hinterland in NE Yorkshire. The manager of one significant non-statutory agency in the town provides context about the attitudes towards homelessness therein:

It's a seaside resort, it's a holiday town, it's a tourist attraction, and the vast majority of people in positions of power spend most of their energies in promoting that aspect of the town. They certainly don't want people's problems in the town, and if we have them they don't want them to be seen, because it ruins the nice clean holiday town image ... the way that statutory agencies work [is] ... reminiscent of the ways statutory bodies worked in the 1960s. ('Caroline')

Interviews with statutory and non-statutory service providers paint the picture of an entrepreneurial town where the provision of emergency services for homeless people is discouraged as being detrimental to the image of a prosperous seaside resort, and where the context of a local authority seemingly out of touch with the modern welfare consensus has resulted in fragmented forms of charity and philanthropy struggling to produce local spaces of welfare. Accounts of the post-industrial city (see Adams, 1986; Hubbard and Hall, 1998; Marshall, 2001) trace how places reflect the push towards a post-industrial and entrepreneurial logic, and how in the city context, these changes are accompanied by similar shifts in welfare provision to a more entrepreneurial and post-welfare model. In Scarborough, the promotion of place image and touristic entrepreneurship has not been matched by a parallel transformation of welfare systems, which have remained until recently rooted in traditional models of local state power. Officers of the local authority acknowledge that restricted ability to house single homeless people:

If a single person went on our register and they'd got very high needs, perhaps no fixed abode, moving around friends, got very high points, it's time to say that ... it may be a long time before we can help them. ('Mike')

They operate on the understanding that "counts have reflected very small numbers if any of rough sleepers" (Mike) and that the vast majority of their applicants are

homeless but not necessarily roofless, and it may well be very short-term, temporary, for a few nights until they can sort something else out. (Leigh)

Accordingly, national measures such as the Rough Sleepers Initiative have not impacted tangibly on the town largely because to apply for RSU funding would be to admit the existence of a homelessness 'problem' which might in turn contradict the logic and images of tourist entrepreneurship.

Instead, services for homeless people have grown through particular individual and organisational initiatives. Largely inspired by the vision and work of one woman—'Linda'—who had dealt with the consequences of youth homelessness while working in the local Youth Enquiry Service, a video was made to portray graphically the existence and conditions of homelessness in the town. The local inter-agency Housing Forum then put together a steering committee (where again Linda was a formative influence) to seek charitable funding, and a grant from

Comic Relief led to the establishment of *Home and Dry* in the early 1990s. Starting off as a drop-in and advice centre for young people aged 16–25, this non-statutory organisation began to expand its activities into what it perceived as gaps in the service infrastructure for young homeless people. Linda persuaded the Foyer Federation for Youth to establish a small foyer (accommodation which acts as a halfway house between supported and independent living) in the town, which was subsequently taken over by a local housing association which is currently extending the foyer project in two further stages. Home and Dry retain a significant involvement in the management of the initial foyer, and have more recently secured a range of funding to make a small number of flats available to young homeless people in the town.<sup>2</sup>

The ethos of Home and Dry is principally one of professional service. Linda told us:

I have very very strict policies, procedures, codes of behaviour and standards that I expect every single member of staff in this organisation to meet. I want a quality service and I want it to be the best ...

Accordingly, Home and Dry uses trained paid staff rather than volunteers, and prizes its local organisational presence even to the extent of active participation in town centre management and regeneration, thereby charting a sensitive political pathway between service provision and alignment with the post-industrial push towards image-based town centre renewal. Home and Dry effectively deals with a client group (16–25 years old) which the local authority are unable to help. Linda, speaking of the organisation's relationship with the local authority, told us "certainly they're quite glad we're here—we take a lot of responsibility off them." Here, then, is a local non-statutory organisation that assumes considerable localised power due to the absence of local authority led initiative in the homelessness sector, although there is evidence that this role is fraught with potential tensions not least with the local authority itself.

In 1997, a further initiative emerged from the local Housing Forum reflecting the lack of service response for homeless people over the age of 25 in Scarborough. The initial idea was to establish a 'Winterwatch' scheme using funding from the national homelessness charity, Crisis, in conjunction with establishing a new local accommodation facility for homeless people to be run by the national organisation Emmaus. However these plans were foiled by extremely strong local reaction against the setting up of an Emmaus centre in the area, as a result of which a new charity—Scarborough Homeless Support Services (SHSS)—was formed in 1998 to co-ordinate short-term

emergency accommodation (usually in bed and breakfast establishments) for rough sleepers under the Winterwatch scheme, and to provide drop-in and advice facilities for homeless over 25s. Initially the initiative appears to have been hampered by unclear objectives stemming from the fragmented interests of different members of the management committee, many of whom were faith-motivated. More recently, a paid manager has been employed to bring greater professional standards to the work of the organisation. SHSS now receives funding from a range of charitable giving, as well as from the local council and from the homelessness charity Crisis. However, the organisation works out of unsuitable building space, and needs to rely on volunteers to carry out its work. Moreover, the absence of direct access hostel accommodation in the town means that SHSS have to rely on the goodwill of local private sector landlords. Caroline, who manages the service, told us:

90% of our clients live in bed and breakfast and guest house provision. In Scarborough we have people that have lived in bed and breakfast for 20 years.

This situation is highly vulnerable to any legislative phasing out of government support for bed and breakfast accommodation as a method of permanent living.

Homelessness in and around Scarborough predominantly concerns local people or those with local connections—the lack of emergency accommodation and analogous services for rough sleepers means that the town is not attractive to in-migrant homeless people. The local advice centres therefore serve local young people, including a significant proportion of young women. 'Heidi' for example is a 17-year-old local woman who left home at 16 because of irreconcilable differences with her parents. She was helped by Home and Dry to gain access to the foyer for 6 months after which she was able to return to live with her parents while she waited to be allocated one of Home and Dry's local flats. Her experience of the foyer was difficult, reflecting the visibility and stigma of homelessness for a local person in a small town:

when I moved in there, I lost all my friends because they thought I was taking drugs, that I was injecting, because of the image that it's got...

Heidi also found the foyer's rules to be restrictive, and that financially the payments for rent and services in the foyer left her unable to afford any luxuries. However, her continuing use of Home and Dry's drop-in led her to undertake further education training and part-time employment.

A similar story emerges from 'Corinne,' another 17-year-old woman who was living in the foyer. After suffering domestic violence in her home in Scotland she moved to Scarborough at the age of 15 to live with her sister. When the relationship broke down, she was put in contact with Home and Dry having been told by the local authority that they were unable to help. After a temporary stay in bed and

<sup>2</sup>Our research was conducted prior to the inclusion of 16 and 17 year olds in priority need categories for statutory homelessness. The role of Home and Dry is now even more important in providing the local authority with a means of fulfilling their obligation to house these age groups.

breakfast accommodation, Corinne was accepted into the foyer. Her positive reaction to the care she received there is evident:

Well actually it was quite good ... You get the support; there's your action plans and they check to make sure that everything's okay. They got me into training and I started Life Skills training programme ... They do work placements to get you into another job ...

Corinne maintains her contact with the drop-in service:

I usually come in every day after training, 'cos you get your meals as well ... come in to see if everyone else is here. There's always activities ... there's barbecues and trips out to the beach, and golf, and things like that so we come in every day.

For Heidi and Corinne, Home and Dry offers a wide-ranging set of responses to the homeless experience of young people unable to depend on family support. However, Home and Dry also offers support for young women whose homelessness is complicated by addiction. 'Wanda' is a 22-year-old woman, born in Scarborough and "on drugs since I was thirteen." She ended up rough sleeping at the age of 16, after falling out with her family and succumbing to chaotic drug addiction:

I was always in trouble with the police, and I just couldn't get on with my mum, and carried on taking drugs, and it just got stronger—drugs like amphetamines and heroin—and I just ended up being on the streets through it all.

Wanda was allocated a place in the foyer, but transgression of rules caused by her drug-fuelled lifestyle led to her being evicted, at which point she was rough sleeping and engaging in "survivalist crimes" (Carlen, 1996) which led ultimately to periods of imprisonment. During her last spell in prison she underwent a 9-day detox, and on her release Home and Dry brokered a return to her parental home whilst waiting for local authority accommodation which has become possible as she has been placed on a priority list due to contracting hepatitis through her drug use. Wanda's stay highlights the precarious nature of Scarborough's emergency accommodation provision. Having fallen foul of the regulations under which the foyer is operated, there were few options other than a return home to prevent a return to living on the streets prior to house allocation.

People over the age of 25 and experiencing homelessness will often have had a longer history of service needs. 'Karen' aged 26 and born in Scarborough was helped by SHSS into local bed and breakfast accommodation. Her history of being in care, violent relationships, mental health problems and drug addiction is all too familiar amongst homeless people, as is her pattern of mobility, first to Leeds and then to London, seeking out places where emergency facilities were available. Karen returned to her hometown thinking that "it's quite easy to get a place if you've got

money to get a bond." However she and her partner slept rough in Scarborough for 2 weeks before getting in contact with SHSS:

we was sleeping at, it's called a Spa, and it used to be an outdoor swimming pool, where the chalets are, I used to sleep in them. And then we came down here to the day centre and that's how we got our B&B .... If it wasn't for these [SHSS] I'd still be on the street 'cos there's no other help apart from this.

Like Home and Dry, SHSS is playing a crucial role in supporting local homeless people in Scarborough. Even with her health problems, Karen has been told to expect to wait at least 6 months before local authority accommodation becomes available. The context of local authority allocation of housing stock is highly significant here. Linda from Home and Dry asserts when discussing the issues faced by young homeless women that

If you were in Middlesbrough and you went to the local authority and asked for a council house you'd have the keys by this afternoon.

The implication is that in Scarborough, the local authority's definition of vulnerability is very different from elsewhere (not least because of a lack of suitable housing stock) and serves to exclude young single women such as those discussed above. In such circumstances the role of non-statutory advice centres is to provide make or break support in the absence of statutory recognition and co-ordination. In this example, 'insider' organisations have forged a local response to homelessness despite a difficult environment in terms of local authority strategy and involvement. Although there are signs of change in this context, the conflicts between promoting the place virtues of a seaside resort, and accessing all available resources to deal with the needs of homeless people remain highly politicised. As a result, the therapeutic landscape of Scarborough for tourists is in opposition to the potential provision of therapeutic places of care for homeless people. The needs of 'deserving' cases are being met thanks to strong interventions from the non-statutory sector, but for others the only supportive infrastructure is the local network of bed and breakfast places, which can be inaccessible during the summer, and at best represent unregulated and potentially problematic spaces of supposed care.

## 7. Conclusions

How, then, do these rural service providers and users interconnect with contemporary governmentalities and mobilities of homelessness? By choosing to include small-scale, rural-based or rural-serving homeless places in our research we beg questions of the geographical unevenness and marginality experienced in the frostbitten extremities of the hand of welfare policy. Each area is disadvantaged by rough sleeper count mechanisms from claiming an



unambiguous problem of rough sleeping, yet each displays clear evidence of homelessness. Although care should be exercised in generalising from these case studies, we suggest that rural place characteristics and linkages, though differing from place to place, certainly influence particular co-constitutions of problems and responses to homelessness. Aside from minor references to rural areas as potential workplaces (in agriculture and fishing) two strands of rural characteristics serve as significant context in these studies. The first suggests that rurality offers a place of escape and of potential therapy. For example, in references to escaping the drug scenes of big cities, or even notorious smaller towns, interviewees relate the potential of dealing with addiction in smaller, quieter places, where individuals can be known but not rejected, and where drug-use or alcoholism may be more intensely visible and therefore controlled. This is not to over-romanticise a rurality that is clearly not immune to the everyday presence of addictive substances (Hyde, 1997), but it may be to indicate some therapeutic potential in rural places (Philo et al., 2003). The second strand is one which associates rurality with leisure, although here the perceptions of a laid-back surfi-culture in Cornwall, where homeless people felt able to articulate their individuality and difference, contrasts strongly with the equally touristic but distinctly less accommodating vibes in the seaside town of Scarborough, where purification of place and resistance to homeless services have been evident. Rurality is also significant in terms of its place in wider linkages of transience. It offers the natural habitus of the 'deep' countryside for wayfarers fluidly travelling their 'routes' and it contains key cultural and even spiritual waymarkers for new age travellers in their search for the new and the natural.

These characteristics of rurality reflect ways in which countryside locations can exert an attraction to in-migrant homeless people, or people who become homeless subsequent to their in-migration. For people who become homeless in their own locality, rurality presents the potential security of a known 'home area'—a place where initial reliance on friends can lead on to contacts with local advisors and potentially to local resettlement. Where no such local advice services and move-on accommodation exist, out-migration to larger, service-rich, places becomes far more likely. Rurality also offers a sense of secure place to come back to—somewhere it is possible to be helped with the necessary bond for taking on a new flat, for example, once the out-migration option has been explored and found wanting.

The particularities of rural places are matched by distinctive historical, political and organisational circumstances at the local level, which have been influential in the specificities of service provision emerging in these places. So, the friary house, for example, represented more than 80 years of local provision for homeless men, and its existence and position in the contemporary landscape of provision is specific to that historical record of service. Similarly, the recent service initiative in Bodmin appears to benefit from

an historic presence of other (psychiatric) forms of service provision in the town, a presence which has brought an enduring familiarity with the proximity of needy 'others.' In Scarborough, by contrast, there is an apparent absence of service history, which could be interpreted as a history of denial or spatial purification in order to protect the town's tourist image from being supposedly compromised by otherness. Politically, it can be argued that the case studies each represent 'outsider'-status services, but there are important differences here within a range of places where the reach of central government funding and regulation appears limited or absent. For example, there is contrasting local government initiative at work here, ranging from a seeming absence of modern welfare consensus in Scarborough, with the result that the development of Home and Dry has effectively served to take over some of the responsibilities of the local council, to the more interventionist local authority regime in Cornwall where local organisations are being drawn into varying degrees of joined-up local strategies. Organisational circumstances are influenced significantly by individual innovation—witness the role of particular individuals in setting up services in Scarborough and Dorset—which appears formative in any explanation of why services are developed in these particular places, but not others. However, the characteristics of those services are at least partly formed by the ethos of individuals and organisations concerned, with the faith-based ethos of the priory house contrasting with the ethos of professionalism spoken about at Home and Dry. Interestingly, it appears that the influence of ethos can change over time, with the faith-beginnings of organisations such as St. Petrocs appearing to be subject to transforming discourses of professionalism.

These place and organisational characteristics combine to contextualise the development of particular spaces of care in these marginal rural locations. Other factors also matter—the state of the built infrastructure in SHSS, for example, appears to hinder the comfort capacity of the service and thereby seems likely to influence the social relations of care concerned (see Garside et al., 1990). However it is clear that distinct spaces of care are performatively being brought into being through, for example, the faith-ethos, acceptance and dignity of the brothers at the friary house, the high-energy professionalism and involvement of managers at Home and Dry and the traveller-savvy atmosphere achieved by the particular experience of a manager (himself an ex-traveller) at St. Petrocs in Bodmin. In each of these cases, symbiotic relations are being achieved with the particular groups of homeless people concerned. Thus the brothers and lay Franciscans achieved a time-deepened affinity with, and 'heart' for, the dwindling band of wayfarers, and had to adjust to their new role as receivers of homeless people being 'dumped' out of other institutions and with nowhere else to go. The original vision of acceptance remained but it was being increasingly morphed into the contemporary circumstances of last resort at the end of the line of



exclusion. Ultimately, the organisation was simply unable to meet the specialist needs of those who were being dumped on its doorstep, and the closure of the friary house suggests that its role as a space of acceptance was overrun by the nature and magnitude of the needs of its new users. The appointment of an ex-traveller as manager of the Bodmin hostel chimes with providing the necessary grasp of the needs of transient non-local service users. Rules are upheld in the hostel, but a place of potential acceptance and rehabilitation is created in an atmosphere of increasing service professionalism. Young homeless people find their needs met in a highly personalised yet professional advice centre that is able to offer some real hope of move-on accommodation in Scarborough, due to efforts to collaborate with resource-rich insider organisations such as the Foyer Federation. There are chimes here with Coles' (1997) idea of post-secular ethics, recognising charitable service provision that holds no expectation of reciprocity.

Of these examples, it is easy to see how the Bodmin and Scarborough services could benefit from increased central resources so as to bring an influx of capacity to the places concerned. The efficacy of any such inclusiveness, however, would depend on the accompanying regulatory regime, which could involve, for example, a redirection of focus away from both the non-locals in Bodmin and those young people in Scarborough who might not meet 'entrenched and vulnerable' criteria. Moreover, the social acceptability of local services could be disrupted if the scale of operations changes through such resource input. The friary house, however, is the service which is least compatible with new governmentalities of welfare (Ling, 2000). Yet it, too, represented a valuable space of care, and it might be argued that similar kinds of services could remain part of the portfolio of rural homelessness services because of the importance of a caring role, which is immune from regulatory odium. Such service spaces will, however, find it difficult to survive if they are merely used as dumping grounds for the most needy and troublesome of homeless people who become excluded from the 'insider' service environment yet require the kind of specialist support which is only available from insider organisations.

The contemporary governance of the service providers and clients associated with rural homelessness is, then, currently highly fragmented and partial in terms of the reach of welfare policy into rural localities. There are certainly clear signs that existing non-statutory service providers are being drawn into elements of statutory control over their service delivery, and that the availability of small-scale finance, and wider expectations about the professionalism required for high-standard service delivery, represent incremental changes to the programmes of welfare delivery in places such as Scarborough and Bodmin. However, these signs can be overstated, and until centrally funded initiatives specifically reflect the needs of homeless people in rural areas, rather than consistently underestimating those needs, responses to rural homelessness will remain patchy and sporadic. Nevertheless,

even within this context of neglect (see Evans, 1999; Robinson, 2003) it is important to recognise at least two forms of emergent spaces of care in rural settings. Both those professionalised and professionalising organisations (such as seen in Scarborough and Bodmin), which might be regarded as working towards a more 'insider' role, and the seemingly old-fashioned 'outsider' charities (illustrated by the friary house which has not, in fact, survived), will be continuing to offer care to particular needy groups in the foreseeable future. Although the former might profitably be drawn further into the co-ordination and funding of contemporary governance, accepting the necessity of concomitant changes in the regulatory environment, we suggest that there will always be a place for specialist spaces of acceptance such as the latter, operating largely outside the reach of such governance, where those excluded from formal services can still receive care.

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